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Strengthening the partnership between UNDP and UNIFEM to achieve gender equality

I. Introduction

1. This paper responds to Executive Board decisions DP/2002/20, DP/2003/8 and DP/2003/26, which urge UNDP to strengthen its gender mainstreaming work through increased collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and request UNIFEM to delineate further a strategy for achieving greater synergy with UNDP. It builds on the comparative advantage of both organizations and lessons learned from their partnerships in recent years. It highlights concrete results to be achieved through synergies between the respective multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) 2004-2007, in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the United Nations reform agenda. The paper is an initial step towards the formulation of a results-oriented business strategy for strengthening UNDP-UNIFEM partnership for 2004-2007.

The UNDP approach to gender equality

2. UNDP has a dual approach to achieving gender equality: mainstreaming gender and promoting women's empowerment, as outlined in the gender equality practice note issued in November 2002, through targeted, strategic interventions – policy dialogue, advocacy, knowledge networking, partnership and building capacity to track and measure progress. UNDP integrates gender through multi-sectoral and cross-thematic interventions to achieve key development goals. Working in more than 160 programme countries and territories, UNDP plays a lead role in the United Nations Development Group and in the resident coordinator system to foster programme coherence and coordination within the framework of the MDGs. With gender equality as one of five key drivers cutting across the goals

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and service lines highlighted in its MYFF, the organization is well positioned to translate commitments to gender equality into policies, practices and concrete results.

3. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 39/125, UNIFEM is mandated to be an autonomous, innovative and catalytic fund in support of women's empowerment and gender equality. Through 15 subregional offices and its global network of partners, UNIFEM provides technical advice and support to promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. It brings expertise in five strategies to its work: advocacy and policy dialogue; building partnerships and knowledge networks; capacity building; disseminating knowledge; and experimentation in achieving gender equality. UNIFEM is a catalyst for gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system.

4. UNIFEM is one of three associated funds of UNDP. Its experimentation generates tested models and strategies for mainstreaming gender that UNDP can multiply and scale up through its global network of country offices. UNIFEM expertise, and its networks at country and regional levels, will benefit the policy advocacy services, programme support and knowledge networking of UNDP at the field level. The demonstrated capacity of UNIFEM as an effective catalyst for gender equality provides a testing ground for gender mainstreaming strategies in UNDP and across the United Nations system.

II. Lessons learned: UNDP-UNIFEM collaboration in 2000-2003

5. Gender mainstreaming, as an institutional and cultural transformation process, remains a major challenge for most development agencies and national governments. In its renewed effort to meet this challenge, UNDP adopted two corporate policy instruments: a gender practice note on mainstreaming gender into all core practices, programmes and operations; and a policy to improve gender balance in management. UNDP has specific instruments to support this work: the global knowledge network, the Japan Women in Development Fund and the gender programme team, including a network of gender specialists integrated into all aspects of the UNDP organization.

6. The results-oriented annual report, 2001 (DP/2002/15), recorded an increase in gender mainstreaming activities across all UNDP goals in more than 90 programme countries. The UNDP annual report of the Administrator 2002 (DP/2003/11) noted joint activities with UNIFEM in more than half of these countries. Periodic communications from the UNDP Administrator and the Executive Director of UNIFEM to country offices have been instrumental in encouraging further partnership in the field, where overall gender capacities are critically limited across organizations. Existing areas of collaboration illustrate the potential for a stronger partnership: (a) UNIFEM execution of UNDP projects; (b) results-based programming; and (c) joint support to the resident coordinator system.

UNIFEM execution of UNDP projects

7. In the past three years, UNIFEM has executed several projects for UNDP, providing programme design and implementation support in UNIFEM areas of

comparative advantage, including: strengthening the gender dimensions of MDG processes in Cambodia; building women's leadership in democratic governance in Burundi; strengthening women's participation in poverty reduction initiatives in Suriname; and promoting women's active involvement in disarmament in Albania. In 2003, UNIFEM started executing a cross-regional programme on gender and the MDGs, funded by UNDP, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, and the Government of Japan.

Results-based programming

8. Stronger results-based management in both organizations has fueled greater synergy through joint planning, capacity building, and programming on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, poverty reduction, crisis prevention, and democratic governance in all regions. For example, UNIFEM, along with its partners, played a key role in passage of Security Council resolution 1325, which highlights the importance of gender equality as a key dimension of crisis prevention and recovery.

9. In its increasing role in crisis prevention and recovery, UNDP is building commitment and internal capacity to gender its responses, including through partnerships that build on the expertise of UNIFEM in gendering peace-building and democratic governance. Field-based collaboration between UNDP and UNIFEM is generating concrete results in Albania, Burundi, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

10. Beyond project execution, UNDP draws on the experience of UNIFEM to further stimulate internal knowledge and coordination efforts, for instance, by involving the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, and the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations in culling lessons from efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325, resulting in the publication by the UNDP Evaluation Office of *Essentials*", which highlights a wide range of lessons learned to strengthen the gender dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction.

Joint support to the resident coordinator system

11. There is a unique convergence of UNDP and UNIFEM mandates to mainstream gender equality into coordination, simplification, harmonization and joint programming efforts. In 2002, UNDP and UNIFEM jointly undertook a global mapping of the gender expertise available in all United Nations organizations, the World Bank and regional development banks, and in 2003 both organizations forged a partnership with the World Bank, the Working Party on Gender Equality and the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Gender Equality from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation for Development (OECD) to build common approaches to gendering the MDGs.

12. Both organizations have been involved in inter-agency efforts, coordinated by UNIFEM, to assess the extent to which gender equality is mainstreamed into common country assessments (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) exercises; and in producing a resource guide (forthcoming) to support enhanced performance by United Nations inter-agency thematic groups on gender.

13. UNDP is making progress in gender mainstreaming, and collaboration between UNDP and UNIFEM has increased significantly. A number of challenges need to be addressed in a more detailed strategy to enhance this collaboration:

(a) More effective, institutionalized links between the UNIFEM subregional programme offices and the UNDP subregional resource facilities (SURFs) to reach a larger number of countries with policy advice and advocacy strategies.

(b) Greater clarity with respect to the specific services, functions, and knowledge products that UNDP needs; where this can be provided through existing gender expertise in UNDP; and where UNIFEM has a comparative advantage. It is critical to build internal understanding that stronger partnership with UNIFEM does not diminish the responsibility of UNDP for gender-responsive programme and policy development.

(c) Stronger synergy in supporting gender equality in United Nations reform and coordination – particularly as it relates to the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), the MDGs, and CCA/UNDAFs.

(d) Demands on the gender expertise of UNIFEM and UNDP already exceed their ability to respond, so greater investments are needed to strengthen these sources of knowledge and experience.

III. Going forward: concrete results from the MYFF, 2004-2007

14. The convergence of UNDP and UNIFEM MYFFs, 2004-2007, offer a map toward greater development and organizational effectiveness and strategic partnerships that support stronger gender equality programming in specific areas.

Development effectiveness

15. The five goals in the UNDP MYFF and the four identified in the UNIFEM MYFF demonstrate that stronger partnerships can be forged on gendering the MDGs and the practice areas – crisis prevention and recovery, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, and democratic governance.

16. The MYFFs highlight service lines where joint initiatives can be strengthened to achieve results to which both organizations are committed. The attached table highlights *indicative* results, drawn from their respective MYFFs, which could be achieved through closer partnership.

17. A menu of options will be consolidated to highlight how UNDP – particularly SURFs and country office staff – can more easily access the knowledge and experience of UNIFEM through: (a) project execution; (b) joint needs assessments, programme formulation, and evaluation processes; and (c) technical and strategic advice, particularly through strengthening UNDP partnerships with gender equality networks.

Organizational effectiveness

18. The UNDP Evaluation Office will undertake an evaluation of the work on gender undertaken by UNDP, taking stock of internal expertise and partnerships, including with UNIFEM. A review of gaps and needs to strengthen gender equality in each UNDP core practice area will strategically map and match where these can

be met through internal strengthening of gender expertise, where UNIFEM experience could provide greater support, and where increased investment is needed.

19. Taking the issue of capacity into account, the two organizations will identify concrete areas in which increased synergy can contribute to sustainable gains in the gender equality capacity of UNDP and the ability of UNIFEM to extend its reach by working strategically through this partnership.

20. A strategy will be developed to strengthen the UNDP knowledge networks with targeted UNIFEM participation in knowledge sharing including through expanding databases of gender experts, good practices and tested resources;

21. UNIFEM will package and market innovations and knowledge services designed to fill any gaps in UNDP knowledge products, and to better support the resident coordinator system in gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

Strategic partnerships, particularly with United Nations country teams

22. Countries where UNIFEM has subregional offices and where SURFs are located will be the initial targets of a well-defined action plan to strengthen coordinated support so that United Nations country teams can better respond to gender mainstreaming demands from programme countries.

23. A particular focus will be on gendering and monitoring coordination mechanisms such as PRSPs, the MDGs and CCA/UNDAFs by building regional competencies, synergies and lessons. At the same time, this aspect of the plan is intended to generate better tracking of strategic partnerships for gender equality at the regional level so as to ensure that synergy replaces duplication and that coordination reduces multiple demands on limited human resources.

IV. Next steps

24. UNDP and UNIFEM will enhance their collaboration through a results-oriented business strategy. Concrete targets, quantifiable indicators, and cost estimates for joint programming, capacity development, and technical advice will be developed; a process for results based monitoring of the partnership will be initiated; and the human and financial resources will be assessed for strengthening their respective roles, synergetic interventions and joint outreach to the United Nations system.

25. UNIFEM and UNDP look forward to feedback and additional guidance from the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA on the next steps for strengthening synergy between the two organizations.

Table

UNDP goals and service lines**	UNIFEM goals	Indicative results to guide UNDP/UNIFEM partnerships on the ground
1. Achieving MDGs/reducing human poverty (a) MDG country reporting (b) Pro-poor policy reform (c) Local policy initiatives (d) Gender mainstreaming (e) Civil society empowerment	**1. Reduce feminized poverty and exclusion**	• Gender-responsive statistical and analytical capacities enhanced and integrated in MDG reports, and national policies and programmes** • Poverty reduction strategies/PRSPs prepared through participatory processes that reflect gender equality commitments • Replicable local poverty initiatives linked to policy change that promotes gender equality** • Pro-poor and pro-women growth policies adopted, with gender-sensitive budgeting used to track resources allocated • Participation and influence of civil society women's networks and grass root groups ensured in national development dialogues, especially with regard to MDGs, PRSPs, and local policy processes**
2. Fostering democratic governance (a) Policy support for democratic governance (b) electoral systems and processes (c) Justice and human rights (d) Decentralization and local governance	**2. Gender equality in democratic governance in time of peace and in recovery from war**	• Leadership capacities of women parliamentarians, policy advocacy groups and networks developed** • Gender equality provisions incorporated into national constitutions • Women's participation in elections as voters and candidates increased and sustained** • Women's human rights and security are protected and promoted** • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) explicitly used as part of human rights approach to development • Women's participation increased in decentralized governance as decision-makers, implementers and managers**
3. Crisis prevention and recovery (a) Conflict prevention and peace-building	**3. Gender equality in democratic governance in time of peace and in recovery from war**	• Gender equality advocates have the knowledge and are able to influence peace negotiations and agreements • Security Council resolution 1325 used as a basis for designing strategies for conflict prevention, peace-building and recovery
4. Responding to HIV/AIDS (a) Leadership and capacity development (b) Development planning (c) Advocacy and communications	**4. Halt and reverse HIV/AIDS amongst women and girls**	• Multi-stakeholder networks – including HIV/AIDS and women, women's networks, and gender equality advocates – able to lead in reversing the epidemic** • Gender-responsive community responses generated and linked to national planning processes that address care, support and treatment • Advocacy and communications used to build understanding of the gender-dimensions of the epidemic and effectively address the vulnerability, stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS

*Selected service lines of UNDP to which UNIFEM has capacity to contribute. It omits the UNDP goal on energy and environm since UNIFEM has little comparative advantage in this area.

**Initiatives on which UNDP and UNIFEM are already working together in some regions or on which they have recently comple joint initiatives.